



LEXINGTON CHRISTIAN ACADEMY  
6TH-8TH GRADE

# 8 COMPUTER SKILLS TO MASTER BEFORE HIGH SCHOOL

## #1 - KEYBOARDING SKILLS

Typing is an important computer skill and early keyboarding instruction is critical to preventing the development of bad habits that are difficult to break.

6th-8th grade students should be able to type 15-25 words per minute. If your child is behind, they can easily catch up to the skill level they need to meet by dedicating 15-45 minutes daily, or a few days a week, to developing their keyboarding skills. There are free websites such as **typing.com**, **typingclub.com**, and **typingtest.com** designed to improve keyboarding skills.

## #2 - USING WEB BROWSERS

Next year, our 6th-8th grade students will use Microsoft Edge. It would be helpful for them to know how to use Microsoft Edge, add websites to "Bookmarks" or "Favorites," and understand how to clear browser history, cache, and cookies to resolve performance issues.

## #3 - WORKING WITH MICROSOFT OFFICE

Microsoft Office is one of the world's most popular products and is widely used in both the academic and professional fields. As such, your student should be familiar with its most well-known programs by the time they reach high school. These include:

**Microsoft Word** - Word is arguably the most popular word processing and document creator program available. Your student will have a leg up as they enter high school if they can use this application to create, format, save, and edit documents; add tables and graphics to documents; adjust margins and spacing; check word counts; create headers and footers; and use track changes.

**Excel** - Students should be able to use this spreadsheet program to organize information, sort and filter data, and create charts and graphs.

**PowerPoint** - Mastery of this slide program allows students to make effective presentations as part of reports for school and in their future workplaces. Students entering high school should be able to create basic presentations with text, pictures, and objects.

Visit the Microsoft Office training page to find tutorials for these and other useful programs.



## #4 - FILE ORGANIZATION

In order to maintain and organize their schoolwork, student should understand how to:

- Create and label folders.
- File content in folders and know that each folder may hold individual files or additional folders with subfolders.
- Read file suffixes and interpret their importance (e.g., that a file ending in .docx will open in Microsoft Word, and .xls will open in Microsoft Excel).
- Use external drives, such as flash drives.
- Transfer and share cloud files to Microsoft's One Drive.

## #6 - USING THE INTERNET FOR RESEARCH

School assignments often require student to research topics on the Internet. Therefore, it is important for students to have strong (and safe) research skills to navigate the Internet. Students should know how to:

- Conduct an effective search with a search engine (e.g., Bing) using advanced search commands.
- Evaluate web resources for authority, currency, purpose, and content.
- Identify legitimate resources.
- Understand copyrights, licenses, and plagiarism in a digital environment and how to cite online sources in papers.

## #7 - BASIC COMPUTER SKILLS: TROUBLESHOOTING

The ability to troubleshoot and fix common computer issues is a helpful skill for anyone who uses a computer regularly. Please see the "16 simple tech solutions" as a guide for your student.

## #8 - DIGITAL SAFETY

Another important lesson school students must learn is how to be safe when going online. You may have taught your child to avoid suspicious sites and emails and stay safe on social networks, but the bad guys online get more devious every day. Here are some tips that can help kids stay safe online:

- Turn on the **"Do Not Track Tool"** on your browsers.
- Make strong passwords and never share them.
- Never click on emails or texted links from unfamiliar senders.
- Learn to look closely at emails, texts, landing pages, etc., to spot misspellings, bad grammar, and other signs of potential phishing.
- Keep personal information personal (don't chat/send photos to strangers).
- Ask permission before signing up for anything.
- Know how to recognize ads and don't click on them.
- Respect age limits on all social networking sites.
- Set privacy settings on all social networking sites.

## #5 - EMAIL ETIQUETTE

Computers offer many communication channels, such as email, chat, and social media posts. To use these channels correctly, students need to understand how messages should change depending on the context. For example, students must understand that writing an email is very different from writing a text message. It is typing an "electronic conversation." The email should include a subject line, proper greeting, body text, and salutation. The body text needs to include the purpose for the email, ask pertinent questions, and/or share information. In addition, the email should use formal word choice, complete sentences, and good grammar.

### 16 SIMPLE TECH SOLUTIONS

1

#### The starting point for many problems

Turn the computer off and then on; close down and reopen the internet; turn the modem or printer off and then on.

2

#### The website doesn't work

Check to be sure the URL is entered correctly, not missing letters or the HTTP. If that doesn't work, change browsers.

3

#### I can't exit a program

The universal exit command for Windows-based computers is Alt-F4.

4

#### I can't find a program

Type the name in the Search field. Most MS and HS students prefer this to finding the program other ways.

5

#### \_\_\_\_\_ doesn't work

This could be the mouse, the keyboard, the monitor, speakers, or some other piece of hardware. Make sure it's plugged in and turned on. If it is, unplug-replug.

6

#### Sound doesn't work

Is it muted? Are headphones plugged in (which means the sound is going into them, not your speakers)? For little ones, do they have the right headphones on?

7

#### I deleted \_\_\_\_\_

If it's part of a document, use Ctrl+Z to Undo. If it's a file, check the recycle bin and restore if it's in there.

8

#### The font is too small

Zoom with Ctrl+ (or Ctrl- to zoom out).

9

#### I can't find \_\_\_\_\_ in the file

The universal Find shortcut is Ctrl+F. This works not only in documents but online.

10

#### The document is 'read-only'

Save-as under a different name and edit.

11

#### I'm worried about security

This is a massive topic but two solutions that work for even kids K-5 is to 1) cover the webcam, and 2) put smartphones in airplane mode (to cut access to the Internet)

12

#### The program froze

Is there a dialogue box open that's waiting for an answer?

13

#### The Shift key doesn't work

Is caps lock on?

14

#### Double-click doesn't work

Push enter after the first click.

15

#### I can't remember how to \_\_\_\_\_

Right-click. This reveals the most common actions for the context you are in.

16

#### The Internet toolbar disappeared

Push F11